

Opening Statement

Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

***“2010 Census: Assessing the Bureau’s Strategy for Reducing
the Undercount of Hard-to-Count Populations”***

***Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives
Oversight and Government Reform Committee***

*Monday, March 23, 2009
2154 Rayburn HOB
10:00 A.M.*

**Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding today’s
important hearing examining the Census Bureau’s
strategy for reducing the undercount of traditionally
hard-to-count populations in the 2010 Census. I look
forward to hearing about the challenges and goals
shaping the Bureau’s Integrated Communications
Campaign to promote the census, improve
participation, and decrease the differential undercount.**

Since the establishment of the decennial census in 1790, every Census has experienced an undercount. According to the Government Accountability Office, the 2000 Census missed an estimated 2% of the U.S. population; a disproportionate number of which were minorities, lower-income households, and children. My district in particular has traditionally been undercounted due to a lack of engagement with local constituencies.

This undercount is troubling to me because without accurate population data it is impossible to ensure that Americans have proper representation in state and federal government, and that federal grants are targeted to where they are needed most.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorized \$501.5 billion worth of new spending measures to revitalize the American economy while assisting those most impacted by the recession. This unprecedented investment in our future makes the need for the 2010 Census to be as thorough and accurate as possible even greater, as the success of the stimulus relies upon complete population data to ensure funds are directed efficiently and equitably.

The Census Bureau's Integrated Communications Campaign reduced the undercount rate for 2000's census relative to 1990, and according to the GAO appears to be "comprehensive and integrated".

Success now depends on the ability of the Bureau to move effectively from the planning to the operational

phase while incorporating best practices and lessons learned from 2000 to translate increased public awareness into actual participation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank today's panelists for their cooperation with today's proceedings. I look forward to hearing more details about the Partnership Program and the targeted media strategy of the Integrated Communications Campaign as we monitor efforts to reduce the undercount in the 2010 Census.

Thank you and I yield back the remainder of my time.